

James V. O'Toole
City Manager



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October 4, 2013

Frank Foster
Anderson House Office Building
S-1486 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chairman Foster:

Chairman Foster and distinguished members of the committee, I along with the entire City of Escanaba would like to thank you for taking testimony on Senate Bills 398 & 397 and House Bills 4782 & 4783. As highlighted by the Senator and Representatives these bills will allow the units of government in Delta and Marquette Counties to pursue Next Michigan Development District for the Upper Peninsula region. For the past few years and with the help of key legislative personnel, the Upper Peninsula but specifically the units of government in Delta and Marquette Counties have gained positive state, regional, and national attention through various outlets in this worthwhile pursuit; and for that I am extremely grateful.

With the passage of these bills it will allow these two counties and dozens of local units of government the opportunity to become the discussion at Businesses (interstate as well as out of state), Universities, Community Colleges, and entrepreneurs for the continual success and potential growth and influence within this state. With over 600 businesses located within the Escanaba city limits, I am proud to say that even through the worst economic times the hard-working people of Escanaba have proven their resilience, fortitude, and prowess which I firmly believe has demonstrated significant economic strides and notoriety. While Delta and Marquette Counties are some of the UP's largest; serving over 60% of the Upper Peninsula's population, I believe it is time that the families, businesses, schools, and residents are rewarded by creating a level playing field which will generate jobs, increase economic activity, increase output for this state, increase educational opportunities, and become even more sustainable for future generations. I sit before you today not asking for money, but asking for opportunity.

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The bottom line is, I firmly believe that the collaboration between the various units of government in Delta County and Marquette County, with nearly all Cities and townships partnering, will align our region with the State's economic development strategy and aid in promoting a vibrant manufacturing, medical, forest products, mining, power and transportation base. Passage of these bills will allow the UP to join the ranks of the other five Development Districts in the State and assist us in becoming a larger economic driving force for this state. Thank you very much for this historic opportunity and I would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



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